

Platt Amendment

The Platt Amendment defined the relationship between Cuba and the United States from 1901 to 1934 and continues to influence it today. At the end of the SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR, U.S. military forces under Gen. Leonard WOOD occupied Cuba in order to maintain stability there after Spain's withdrawal. The newly independent Cubans drew up a constitution in 1900; however, the document made no provision for the continuation of Cuban-U.S. relations. U.S. Secretary of War Elihu ROOT told the Cubans that such provisions were a necessary condition for U.S. withdrawal from the island. He formulated a series of provisions, incorporated into a rider attached to the Army Appropriations Bill of 1901 and sponsored by U.S. Senator Orville H. Platt, a Republican from Connecticut. The amendment made Cuba, in effect, a U.S. protectorate. It limited Cuba's treaty-making capacity, restricted its right to contract public debt, and gave the United States the right to maintain naval bases in Cuba and to intervene in Cuban affairs in order to preserve order or Cuba's independence. These provisions were appended to the Cuban constitution in 1901, and U.S. forces withdrew the next year. In 1903 the provisions were formalized by treaty.

The Platt Amendment formed the basis for U.S. reoccupation of Cuba in 1906-09 following an uprising led by Juan Vicente GOMEZ and for various other instances of actual or threatened U.S. interference in Cuba's affairs. Long regarded as a symbol of "Yankee imperialism," the Platt Amendment was repealed by the United States on May 29, 1934. The Americans retained their lease on Guantanamo Bay, however, and maintained their naval base there; by the treaty of 1903 (replaced in 1934) the lease is revocable only by the mutual consent of both countries.

Bibliography: Healey, David F., *The United States in Cuba 1898-1902* (1963); Langley, Lester D., *The Cuban Policy of the United States* (1968); Perez, L.A., Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment: 1902-1934* (1986).